



Welcome to the April edition of the Dulles Direct Newsletter. Budget season has officially ended (with one caveat) and the Board of Supervisors is now fully engrossed in deliberations on Metro. In this newsletter, I'll cover those issues as well as provide an update on discussions to accelerate construction of an elementary school in our area—and how you can participate in the discussion.

These next few months will continue to be very busy. Many residents are making their feelings known to me on a variety of issues, especially Metro. I'm continuing to try to do my best to respond to your emails in a timely manner. Please know that even if you haven't heard back from me yet, I do read every email when it comes in. As always, I urge you to visit my [Facebook page](#) to stay up to date on key issues.

Finally, if you are attending the South Riding Expo and Yard Sale on Saturday, May 5<sup>th</sup>, please come by and say hello! I will have a booth at the Expo and my staff and I will be available to answer any and all questions.

## Legislative Update

**FY13 Budget:** The Fiscal Year 2013 budget was formally approved, as expected, earlier this month. The budget sets the tax rate at \$1.235 per \$100 assessed. As I've pointed out before, this represents a five cent reduction from the FY12 tax rate of \$1.285 and a 3.5 cent reduction from the "zero tax increase" budget of \$1.27 (which takes into account a slight increase in assessments). The one caveat is that now that the General Assembly has finally approved a budget, we will need to decide how to allocate an additional \$7.9 million in state money for education. The Board of Supervisors has two options: use the funds to pay for the local tax transfer that was allocated, or provide the School Board an additional \$7.9 million.

The Board will make a decision on that funding at the May 2<sup>nd</sup> Business Meeting. Throughout the budget process, it seemed to me that members of both the Board of Supervisors and the School Board operated under the assumption that state money would be used to help reduce the shortfall between our Board's allocated appropriation and the School Board's budget proposal (which amounted to about \$22 million). Therefore, I think it would be unfair to withhold the

funding at this juncture and I'm going to support allocating the state funds as an additional transfer. Doing so will not impact the tax rate. However, I would hope that the School Board will not choose to spend any budget surplus that might materialize over the course of the year but rather save it so it can be applied towards future year funding or debt reduction. There are still some major areas of the school budget that deserve scrutiny and I'm confident that the School Board will do so before next year's budget process.

**Claiborne Parkway:** I've talked a lot about completing some of the missing road links in Loudoun County, and I'm pleased to report that we're moving forward on one of them. The Board of Supervisors authorized \$510,600 in cash proffer funds to pay for the design of the missing section of Claiborne Parkway, allowing it to be completed from Croson Lane to Ryan Road. This road is a vital part of the transportation infrastructure in the rapidly growing Brambleton and Broadlands areas. When completed, it will give motorists another route from Loudoun County Parkway to Route 7 and alleviate some cut through traffic in the Belle Terra neighborhood. Construction funding has been identified through previous proffers and some state matching funds, and construction is estimated to begin in 2014. Also—because I can anticipate your emails—please know that I'm still working with my colleagues on two other major missing links: Loudoun County Parkway and Tall Cedars. Progress is being made on both of them.

**North/South Access Improvements:** Back in my January newsletter, I had discussed the Board's intentions to amend the Countywide Transportation Plan (CTP) to restore previously planned long term road improvements on the north-south corridors of Northstar Boulevard and Belmont Ridge Road. There has been quite a bit of debate and discussion about exactly what we're doing so I will explain.

First, the CTP is a long term planning document—nothing more. It is intended to project and identify what our road network will need to be in the future to support our continued growth. Loudoun is projected to have 450,000 citizens by 2030, and our current road network is inadequate for the 320,000 people we already have—so it is vital to plan ahead. There are no funds associated with the roads on the CTP and each individual project would still need to go through a normal public process.

One of the corridors that the County has identified for many years is a north-south link from Prince William County to Route 7. From north to south, this link would include Belmont Ridge Road and 659-relocated (Northstar Boulevard) south of Brambleton, crossing Route 50 and Braddock Road and continuing until it aligns with the 234 bypass in Prince William County.

Although this link had been planned as a possible 6-lane road since 1991, in 2010 the previous Board of Supervisors voted narrowly to move the northern section (Belmont Ridge Road, north of Croson Lane) down to a future 4 lanes, and the southern section (Northstar, south of Braddock Road) down to 2. The stretch of Northstar between Route 50 and Braddock is still planned as 6-lanes--the previous Board did not change it and therefore it is not part of the amendment being considered by our Board.

It is the change to a planned 2 lane road south of Braddock that concerns me the most. Gum Spring Road is not a long term solution and was never intended to be. It makes sense to construct a road further west from Gum Spring that would serve as a major link to points south so that our citizens can access 95 without traveling east and having to deal with the Beltway.

Therefore, at our first Board meeting of the year, Chairman York moved to restore the previous road network in the CTP. Our Board will vote on that amendment on May 2<sup>nd</sup>. There have been concerns expressed by citizens primarily who live in the northern section about what a future 6-lane Belmont Ridge Road would look like. I understand those concerns. Regardless of the CTP, I don't think there is any desire to see Belmont Ridge more than 4 lanes for the foreseeable future. However, I do think it is important to retain enough right-of-way to expand further, should it ever be necessary. I have not decided how I will vote on the number of lanes in that section—and frankly I think that aspect of the discussion is a bit academic as long as the right of way exists.

I do strongly support restoring the southern section of this link to 6 lanes. In addition to providing better access to Loudoun residents, this road could also be a path to Dulles Airport from the south. Dulles is currently at just 50 percent passenger capacity and 8 percent cargo capacity. It is in Loudoun's interest to see Dulles grow—every year, we receive about \$1 million in revenue from leases on the airport, and about \$33 million in revenue from businesses around it that either rely on it or support it. That number could be much higher which would allow us to pay for long term capital needs. The primary constraint on growth at the airport is lack of vehicle access.

I have had discussions with the Deputy Secretary of Transportation regarding this road link. The Commonwealth shares my interest in improving access to Dulles and is currently in the early planning stages of what exactly that will look like. I would envision significant improvements to Route 606 as being part of this potential project. There will be many more updates on this, and a full public process to discuss it at the appropriate time, but I wanted to make you aware of the discussion. At this time, no specific route has been chosen. If the road follows the path of Northstar as planned on the CTP, it would run roughly along the western edge of Stone Ridge and head south. We're a long way from that level of detail, but my input to the Commonwealth will be to make sure any potential road has as limited impact on communities as possible.

**Metro:** Obviously, whether to “opt in” or “opt out” of the Metro project is a huge decision for Loudoun County. It is an extremely complex issue and the Board of Supervisors must methodically work through each aspect of the decision. We're still at the beginning of the process, having had just one of our five planned work sessions so far.

I will not go into great detail on every outstanding issue in this newsletter. My position is the same as it always has been: I'd like to see Metro come to Loudoun because I think it will be good for our county and vital for economic development. However, there will also be major costs and we can't blindly make the decision to opt in without fully understanding them and knowing how we will pay for them. Unfortunately, the state has only committed \$150 million to Phase II of this project and the federal government has committed nothing. The funding comes entirely from higher tolls on the toll road and from Fairfax and Loudoun counties.

During the April 17<sup>th</sup> work session, representatives from Metro appeared in front of the Board for questions—and there were many tough questions. Mine focused on the formula used to project Loudoun’s annual contributions to Metro. In addition to the \$265 million we must pay in capital costs, there will be an annual fee for operating and capital expenses which Metro estimates to be in the \$15 million per year range.

Clearly, at this point we’re still in the fact-gathering stage—and we have a ways to go. At some point, we will transition into a debate and discussion about the cost and benefits. I want to make sure that the public plays a role in that discussion. Loudoun County will be hosting Dulles Rail Public Outreach Sessions with county staff to provide information and answer questions. Including one in our district at Freedom, there are three sessions scheduled:

- May 24: Mill Run Elementary School Gymnasium from 7-9 p.m.
- May 30: Freedom High School Cafeteria from 7-9 p.m.
- June 2: Loudoun Valley High School Cafeteria from 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

In addition, I will be having my own Town Hall Meeting which will be primarily focused on this issue. I have been holding off scheduling it because I wanted to understand as much as I could about the issue beforehand, but look for that announcement soon.

## **Dulles District Updates**

**Future Dulles South Elementary School (ES-21) Update:** As many of you know, Liberty and Pinebrook Elementary Schools are becoming increasingly overcrowded. Our projections are showing significant overcrowding starting next year, and very strong kindergarten registration in the last few weeks backs that up. Therefore, it is my belief that we must accelerate construction of a new elementary school (known as ES-21) in the Dulles South area.

School Board member Jeff Morse and I have been working on this item for several months. On **May 15<sup>th</sup> at 5 p.m.** the Board of Supervisors will be holding a work session with the School Board on ES-21 and Dulles South schools. Jeff and I have been advocating for the planned school to be moved up one year in our Capital Improvement Plan, to FY2013, which would mean it would go on bond referendum this year and be scheduled to open for the 2014 school year.

In addition, Jeff and I believe the school should be built on existing land owned by LCPS adjacent to Lunsford Middle School. During my initial efforts to move forward with that proposal, not enough of my colleagues on the Board agreed and my motion failed 3-6. Part of that was due to strongly divided opinions on the School Board, which had backed our proposal 5-4. Since that time, we have had intense discussion over possible sites, and I believe progress has been made with our colleagues.

**Members of the public have an opportunity to address the Board of Supervisors in person and weigh in on this issue:**

You may address the Board at the General Business and Public Input Meeting on **Tuesday, May 1<sup>st</sup>**. The meeting begins at 5:00 p.m. with public input to begin as early as 6:00 p.m. You can call 703-777-0200 to sign up in advance to speak or simply show up and approach the dias on the right side of the room to sign up. You will be given 2 minutes to address the Board.

In the alternative, you can email [bos@loudoun.gov](mailto:bos@loudoun.gov) which reaches all Board members.

**Advanced Life Support Ambulance Service:** I have some good news to report. You may recall that during the budget deliberations, I obtained \$40,000 to train 4 EMS personnel based at Dulles South Station #19 so that service could be upgraded from Basic Life Support to Advanced Life Support (ALS) at that station. The training takes about a year. However, I have worked with Chief Brower and he has decided to shift personnel around and take advantage of some new crews that have just completed the training in order to begin providing ALS service starting next month to our station. This upgrade in service will help ensure that ALS response times does not lag due to traffic and the new location of the Arcola Pleasant Valley station in Brambleton. We are fortunate to have outstanding career and volunteer fire and EMS personnel in Loudoun County. I unfortunately witnessed first hand the professionalism of our crews in dealing with the house fire in South Riding that destroyed two homes.

**Lyme Disease Prevention:** As I mentioned in the March newsletter, the Board passed a 10-point plan to combat Lyme disease. One of the steps in this plan was to begin a pilot program to spray for ticks in several county-owned parks in order to reduce their population.

At my request, Conklin Park in South Riding was included in this pilot program and spraying has been scheduled for Friday, April 27<sup>th</sup>. The park cannot be sprayed if there is any chance of significant rain within 24 hours so that date might shift. It is recommended that citizens do not go into the sprayed areas until the product has dried. Signs will be posted prior to spraying and Parks and Recreation staff will be onsite to ensure that citizens do not go into the sprayed areas. Spraying is being scheduled to end no later than 2:30 p.m.

## **Announcements**

**South Riding Spring Business Expo and Community Yard Sale:** The Spring Business Expo and Community Yard Sale will take place on Saturday, May 5<sup>th</sup> at the Dulles South Multipurpose Center. More information is available on the website by [clicking here](#). I will have a booth at the event and will be available to answer questions throughout the morning.

**Hal and Bernie Hanson Regional Park Workshop:** The Hal and Bernie Hanson Regional Park is planned on a 257-acre parcel on Evergreen Mill Road. The final design workshop for the park is scheduled for May 2<sup>nd</sup> from 7:00-9:00 p.m. at Briar Woods High School (22525 Belmont Ridge Road, Ashburn). The workshop will include a presentation of the preferred design concepts (based on input from the first two workshops) as well as an opportunity for additional public input. For more information, please feel free to call 703-777-0343 or email [prcs@loudoun.gov](mailto:prcs@loudoun.gov).

**VDOT Six-Year Improvement Program Public Hearings:** The Commonwealth Transportation Board will be conducting public hearings to give citizens the opportunity to review and provide comments on projects and programs to be included in the Fiscal year 2013-2018 Six-Year Improvement Program, including highway, rail, and public transportation initiatives. The public hearing for our district is schedule for May 3<sup>rd</sup> at 6:00 p.m. It will be held at the VDOT District Office (4975 Alliance Drive, Suite 1N201, Fairfax, VA 22030) in the Potomac Conference Center. If you would like to participate but are unable to attend, you can email your comments to [Six-YearProgram@vdot.virginia.gov](mailto:Six-YearProgram@vdot.virginia.gov). I have been working with the Commonwealth on a plan to improve Braddock Road in Fairfax County and it certainly would not hurt for the CTB to hear from citizens on this corridor in particular.

**Loudoun Lyme 5k:** The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Loudoun Lyme 5k has been scheduled for Sunday, May 6<sup>th</sup> from 7:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. at The National Conference Center (18980 Upper Belmont Place, Lansdowne, Virginia 20176). All net proceeds will go to The National Capital Lyme and Tick-Borne Disease Association and will be used to educate the public and physicians about Lyme disease. The event will also feature a 1M family walk, children's activities, and an information fair on Lyme disease. For more information or to register, please visit [www.loudounlyme.org](http://www.loudounlyme.org).

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